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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE.

Sunday School Examinations.—With the current six months the Sunday School examination system of the Institute must undergo some changes. These will be in the line of rendering the examinations more accessible, and if possible making them take a more general hold upon the Sunday School world. Up to this time, while purporting to cover the ground of the International lessons, preparatory work has been assigned, and direction sheets and helps suggested. This has made the work really a course of study with an examination at the close.

As other departments of the Institute work—the Young People's Four Years' Course, with one thousand members already at work, and the proposed reading courses, which begin October 1, 1894,—now render a study course, based on the International lessons, unnecessary, the examination will in future confine itself strictly to the lines of the lessons which it is supposed to follow.

A preparatory outline will therefore be published in the leading International Sunday School publications early in each quarter. The examination upon the lessons of the six months will take place Saturday, June 30, 1894. The questions in three grades will be sent to all superintendents or teachers who remit ten cents to the Institute before June 1. In quantities the question sheets will be furnished at two cents each.

Any minister, Sunday School superintendent or teacher may become the examiner for his candidates. All candidates desiring to have their papers graded and to receive certificates from the Institute will forward their papers through the examiner to the office of the Institute, enclosing fifty cents for each paper. Of course no fee is required of those who do not wish to have their papers graded by the Institute.

The perfect accessibility of the plan will, it is hoped, secure its general adoption in the Sunday School world.

Correspondence Work in the English Bible.—Much has been said about the work of the Institute in popularizing the study of the English Bible. It must not, therefore, be concluded that the thorough and scholarly element in this department of work has been abandoned. On the contrary, students are continually enrolling for the higher work, and not a few of those who are now making the teaching of the English Bible a specialty in our schools and colleges received their first inspiration from the correspondence courses of the Institute. Questions in regard to the method used in this correspondence work in the English Bible are frequently asked. The following specimen of

a direction and recitation sheet, two of each of which are exchanged by the Institute and the pupil every fortnight, will perhaps illustrate the plan.

Specimen Lesson—Luke 4:31-44. (Read very carefully the passages for study).

I. Subject: Christ's early appearance at Capernaum and neighboring towns.

II. Words and Phrases: vs. 38, *great fever*: medical term for violent fever heat; vs. 39, *over her*; Jesus was bending over her; *rebuked*: the fever regarded as a hostile power; *immediately*: the proof of the miracle is in the suddenness of the effect; the *sun was setting*: a picturesque touch; vs. 40, *every one*: his ministry knew no weariness, etc.

III. Summary: A Sabbath day of teaching and miracle working is closed with a wonderful scene of healing; it was the last day of his early ministry in Capernaum. On the next day, he starts on his mission to the neighboring towns.

Observation: vs. 41, vs. 43. Christ's activity was ceaseless when once he had entered on his work.

Christ was anxious to conceal his Messiahship until he had done his work; for its announcement brought him into danger, as at Nazareth.

Topics for Study:

(1) The public excitement. Consider what was the occasion of so much excitement; what was the early popular conception concerning Christ. Could the excitement be expected to last?

(2) Christ's early miracles: Consider how they were performed, some by a simple rebuke, others by the soothing touch of his hand. The crowd was in breathless sympathy, and every body believed in his power. The miracles were almost countless.

Religious teaching:

As long as Christ wanted to heal their bodies, they were very willing to cleave to him.

Recitation:

I. Note the variations between Revised Version and Authorized Version: vs. 31, R. V., "And taught them on the Sabbath day"; R. V., "And he was teaching them on the Sabbath day"; vs. 43, A. V., "I must preach the kingdom of God," R. V., "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God."

II. What is the subject of the section?

The wonderful effect of Christ's early visit to Capernaum.

III. Explain the noteworthy words and places:

Vs. 39. *Immediately*: It was a miracle because she arose immediately and ministered. Vs. 43. *Every one*. Christ could not desist from teaching until *every one* was healed. Vs. 39. The *sun was setting*. We can imagine the crowd gathered amid the quiet beauty of the early twilight, etc.

IV. Thought of the section:

The "Specimen Lesson" is satisfactory, except the expression "last day." Was it actually his last visit to Capernaum?

V. Topics for study : Discuss the topics suggested in the Specimen Lesson. *Public Excitement* : So many marvelous deeds of healing raised the public mind to the very highest pitch of excitement. The impression was overwhelming that a great and wonderful prophet had arisen among them, and they were very unwilling to let him go away from them. And yet it is likely they will soon forget his deeds of healing when once he has pointed out their sins and exhorted them to follow him as Teacher and Guide.

VI. Religious Teaching :

The "Teaching" in the Specimen Lesson is excellent, but it does not indicate how Christ's miracles were as much the spontaneous expression of his divinely tender heart as of a settled purpose to prove his Messiahship.

Special questions for discussion :

Why was Capernaum so favorite a center for Christ's work ?

Because it was on the main Roman road to the north, and was the emporium of trade. People were constantly coming and going from many parts of the country and world.